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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
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RUCNTXD/AMEMBASSY MAJURO PRIORITY 0061
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3834
RUEHSV/AMEMBASSY SUVA PRIORITY 0168
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 5103
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 1898
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4646
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 2057
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2711
RUEHBAD/AMCONSUL PERTH 0853
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 001092

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: PAPUA -- RESULTS ANNOUNCED IN KEY ELECTION

REF: JAKARTA 1006 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4 (b+d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Local election officials have announced a winner of a closely contested election in a key mining district in Papua, eastern Indonesia. The candidate of GOLKAR--the country's largest party--was named winner. Faced with angry supporters of the losing candidate, however, officials made the results provisional. The possibility of a protracted dispute over the results could lead to unrest in the already tense Mimika area, which is the site of a huge mining operation run by a U.S. firm. END SUMMARY.

RESULTS IN PAPUA ELECTION

12. (SBU) Residents of Mimika district in south-central Papua voted May 19 for bupati (district regent) and vice bupati. The vote was the first-ever direct election of local officials in an area that is home to the giant Grasberg copper and gold mine operated by U.S. company Freeport-McMoRan. The voting occurred without incident. It took days, however, for the local election commission to tabulate the results, many of which came from rural areas of the sprawling, lightly populated region. To be extra careful (not that that really helped--see below), the election commission apparently counted and recounted the votes--one reason for the two-week delay in releasing the results.

13. (U) Election officials announced on June 2 that Klemen Tinal and running mate H. Abd Muis had won in a close vote. Tinal and Abd Muis, backed by a GOLKAR-led multi-party coalition, topped the PDI-P (Indonesian Party of Democratic Struggle) backed team of Yoseph Yopi Kilangin and Yohanes Helyanan by approximately 1400 votes. This slim margin is around two percent of the 84,000 ballots cast.

THE LOSERS ARE ANGRY

14. (SBU) The results were immediately challenged by the losing team. Kilangin and Helyanan's supporters angrily condemned how the counting was done during a raucous public meeting with the local election commission. Faced with these objections, election officials said the results announced

were "temporary." They did not, however, explain what this qualification meant. Nor did they outline subsequent steps they would take in order to finalize the results.

SITUATION TENSE

¶5. (C) The situation in Mimika is tense. The local police are on a heightened state of alert and Freeport has advised its employees to avoid unnecessary trips into Timika (the capital of the district).

¶6. (C) Mimika has a long history of unrest and experienced a two-day riot in November 2007. Recent migrants--many of whom engage in illegal mining of Freeport's tailings--have occasionally clashed with long-time residents. Tensions between Papuan ethnic groups are also common and an on-and-off tribal conflict has raged in the highlands around Timika. The possibility of a protracted dispute over the election results could provoke more unrest in this already tense area.

HEFFERN